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ASK A LOCAL

## ROMAN HOLIDAY

AFAR.com local expert **Katie Parla**—a writer, sommelier, and 11-year resident of the Eternal City—catches us up on the places worth visiting right now.

### shop

#### WHERE CAN I BUY AUTHENTIC SOUVENIRS?

You'll definitely want to head to the stylish neighborhood of Monti for two stores, **Pots** and **Spazio Artigiano**. Pots stocks one-of-a-kind plates and tea sets in earthy shades, and Spazio Artigiano sells hand-painted ceramics sourced from Sicily and Umbria along with bright scarves that are woven on a loom in the back room. If you're looking for Italy's famous leather goods, go to **Federico Polidori's studio** near the Pantheon. He stitches briefcases, belts, and wallets by hand and will also customize items to your personal taste.

### drink

#### WHERE (AND WHAT) SHOULD I DRINK?

During the last year, the number of craft cocktail bars has multiplied in response to local demand. At **Litro**, veteran mixologist Pino Mondello riffs on classics that he often spikes with smoky mezcal, his favorite (and decidedly un-Italian) spirit. For a classic martini poured with one of 80 gins from around the world, try **The Gin Corner**, which opened recently in the lobby of the Hotel Adriano. And if you want something wholly original, I'd suggest an early-evening visit to **Co.So Cocktail & Social** in Pigneto for the oddly delicious Carbonara Sour, a savory and peppery concoction made with *guancia*-infused vodka.

### family

#### WHAT UNDER-THE-RADAR SPOTS ARE GREAT FOR KIDS?

It rarely makes the conventional tourist map, but the central neighborhood of Testaccio has a thriving food market. Pick up picnic provisions here before visiting the nearby **Big Bambú**—a tower constructed by artists Mike and Doug Starn using 6,000 poles and 60 miles of rope. You can hike up its internal staircase for a beautiful view of the city. I think the most underrated art experience in Rome, though, is found across town in the Parioli neighborhood. There, the **National Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia** displays sarcophagi, bronze weapons, and rare terra-cotta statues the Romans didn't destroy, all of which were exhumed from tombs that are more than 2,500 years old. Unless your young ones are budding historians, this museum is best for teens.

See more of Katie Parla's Rome picks in our guide at [afar.com/visit/rome](http://afar.com/visit/rome).